



In Search of True Perspective

Volume Two

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‘La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah.’

(There is no power and no strength except with Allah)

I dedicate this humble contribution to our beloved

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and then to all elders of

Alavi family

Why I Wrote this!

Like many folks, I grew up with lots of misnomers prevailing in the culture. But I often ignored to find the real meaning, for the rhetoric sufficed me in communicating and understanding. As I grew up in Urdu speaking culture, however, learned English as a first language it further led to a discord in my thought process. Put it differently, I was familiar with everyday concepts but had little understanding of it. Hence, intuition prevailed in my opinions and responses.

But I was wrong! I needed to know the true meaning of many concepts that I come across every day so I can have correct understanding and to make informed opinions.

In the following pages I have tried to revisit the working definitions of everyday concepts thus making it easier to develop true perspective.

Sohailuddin Alavi

Knowing is Not Enough

Often, we work day-in day-out with concepts but our actions remain shallow. For example, we talk about teamwork in a workplace but when it comes to making teams, we often rename the titles only. The structure and dynamics remain the same. Likewise, in pursuit of building more focus on customers, companies try to bring in the marketing concepts. Once again, the sales officers are renamed as marketing officers while their job descriptions remain unchanged. The problem lies in the fact that we may know the concepts but do not develop understanding of it.

"Knowing and understanding" are related to each other, but not the same. Each is a distinct mental state: Knowing is static and refers to discrete facts and perceptions, while understanding is described as the ability to analyze and place those facts and perceptions in context to form a big picture. Source – Wikipedia

Knowledge consists of facts, beliefs, experiences and perceptions. Understanding is premised on knowledge and empathy. It is an ability to describe, analyze, interpret and to put concepts into action in a rational manner and to further articulate new knowledge.

To develop understanding, one should practice the followings; -

- a. Read between the lines*
- b. Relate to the context*
- c. Think out-of-box*
- d. Examine critically*
- e. Visualize in action*

Morality is Working with Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a sort of psychological empowerment or an ability to make principled decisions. Daniel Goleman the famous researcher of EQ theory, described it as a set of personality attributes, namely; Self-regulation (ability to control impulse), Hope (positive outlook of the future), Trust (believing in others) and Empathy (sensitivity to others). Last but not the least is Morality (an awareness to separate right from wrong) In short, emotions form the basis of principles and cognitions are the basis for logic. Emotions generate in the heart, while cognitions are processed in the brains. One attains rationality at 9:9 quadrant, where emotions and cognitions are at their best.

Case in point, "If it comes down to our conscience vs opportunity for instance. EQ would encourage us to follow morals over expected gains while IQ would help evaluate the options mechanistically"

Moral values and principles should prevail in decision making. Having said this, unless an opportunity qualifies moral values and principles it is not an opportunity in the true sense. In other words conscience should come first and opportunity should come next. This is rational and gives emotional stability naturally, known as consonance (Nafs-e-mutmaina). Experiments have proved that morality is natural or innate.

But at times, opportunities (or lust) dominate our conscience (Nafs-e-ammara). In such situations, we prefer our motivation over conscience. However, this causes emotional anxiety or guilt at the subconscious level (Nafs-e-lawama). When this happens, we rationalize our actions and sometimes even the moral values and principles to regain emotional stability – rationalized consonance.

Interestingly, consonance is gained in both cases. The first one is natural and sustainable, the second one is manipulated and cannot be sustained for long. For example, those who are habitual of breaking the law, learn to rationalize their actions and continue to enjoy emotional stability without any explicit guilt. How do we rationalize is explained below; –

Compartmentation is the most commonly used approach to rationalizing. Here we define different values for different situations or aspects of life. For example, we rightly have no tolerance for blasphemous speech but at the time we rationalize cheating customers, profiteering, bribing, evading taxes and exploiting workers under the disguise of securing profit or cost cuts, etc. On the social side, we value helping relatives and friends but at the same time we justify when we defame someone by saying we are speaking nothing but truth, etc.

We also rationalize through distortion and selectivity. Distortion means deliberately justifying a wrong as right.

For example, when we give bribe, we justify ourselves that it was a necessary evil. Sometimes, we also try to justify a wrong action by focusing on its otherwise justified outcome. Such as robbing one person and giving money to the poor. Or earning haram for the sake of supporting family's legitimate needs.

Selectivity is simply looking at the positive side and denying the negative side of our actions. Such as, transacting on interest promotes economic activity or is sometimes the sole source of income for many and not looking at its sanctity or devilish effects.

Manifestations of Fear

Fear is an intensely unpleasant feeling in response to perceiving or recognizing a danger or threat. Fear causes physiological changes that may produce behavioral reactions such as mounting an aggression or withdrawal¹. But if the fear is positive then it leads to discipline and improvement.

Fear of Allah - One might pay zakat only to protect his wealth - a ransom money. (fear of losing). Others may pay zakat as long as they have this belief that they will be punished in life hereafter if they don't pay (fear of punishment). This type of fear goes away with the belief that Allah will forgive anyways. So many wrong things we do in this way. Finally, people may pay zakat voluntarily as something right or good (fear leads to responsibility)

What triggers Fear? We can answer this by looking at multiple manifestations of fear. Such as; fear of loss (theft), fear of punishment, fear of aftermath and a pinch-of-salt (despite best of the efforts, a feeling of inadequacy).

The fear what if I lose the job or a relationship makes us chaotic, and encourages us to follow hook or crook approach in life.

It is a state of disbelief. It destroys our confidence and we lose hope. So, we should stay away from it.

The fear of reprimand deters us from doing wrong but only to the minimum extent to avoid punishment. If I see a police man on the signal I would rather not cross on the Red Light but either

if he is not there or I know that I can get away by paying him bribe my fear would be gone. It is externally driven fear.

It can be a fear at one time and not at another. The more we are in control of our situation less would be the fear.

The fear of aftermath is about thinking of the consequences tomorrow of our today's actions. It deters us from doing wrong as if we have the conviction about the outcome of our actions, knowledge is not enough

The stronger the conviction, more effective will be the deterrent effect of fear

The fear that that I need to do more is a kind of positive fear and pushes us to continually do better than the last time (improve). It also deters us from being complacent, inertia or trapped in our comfort zone.

This fear is from internal need to be perfect. It encourages us to do right things right all the time. A student would spend an extra hour learning in hope to do even better in the exam.

We definitely need to inculcate fear of consequence and a positive fear. Fear of reprimand would work when punishments

are just and unescapable. Fear of loss is destructive and should be discouraged.

¹.Source: Wikipedia

Motivation

Motivation is one of the three core predispositions in a performance framework i.e. Capacity, Motivation and the Immediate Environment. When motivation is missing, performance becomes doubtful.

A layman's misnomer is that on the whole we are not motivated. Reality is however different. Each of us is motivated. Whatever is the case, the dilemma is that performance on the whole remains short of its potentials in most of the instances.

To uncover the dilemma, we need to revisit our problem definition. Each of us is indeed motivated, however our motivation is somehow narrowed down to the pay check and does not drive us to make a difference in our performance. In other words while we feel responsible to earn money, we fail to take responsibility to deliver performance: It is in fact a discord between our right to earn and responsibility to perform.

The situation prevails because organizations provide extrinsic incentives alone rather than offering a holistic set of intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcements.

Defamation is Against Morality

Defamation generally means putting false allegations on third persons thus unjustly destroying their credibility. In Holy Quran Allah has forbidden talking about others' real weaknesses or mistakes and making false allegations on them, for doing so we not only violate their privacy but also cast a lie on to them. Allah has taught us that do not gossip about third persons nor should believe someone when he tells you of his allegation on others. Furthermore, Allah teaches not to deep-dive into third persons' life. Instead, speak in credible language; always believe positive of the other persons and respect their privacy.

Unethical usage of modern communication channels like social media, digital media, Facebook, twitter accounts emails etc. are invading the privacy and legitimizing the culture of intrusion in the personal lives of people at large, which has led to apathy towards defamation, harassment and stalking. All this is causing unimaginable damage to the emotional wellbeing, privacy and sometimes life as a whole of the subjects. Instances abound of withdrawal from the mainstream, mental sickness and even suicide

Interestingly, in Japan the Defamation law prohibits speaking about third persons that may violate their privacy and credibility; this includes putting allegations on them which may or may not be true – a true Islamic spirit.

Emotional Well-being

Ego, Self-esteem, self-respect, confidence (clear conscience) and recognition are an innate right of everyone. Presence of these attributes contribute to the emotional well-being of an individual, also referred to as physis energy. Sometimes, oneself or others act so critical, either knowingly or unknowingly, of one's personality that destroys the perception of individual. They are referred to as Energy Vampires. When a person becomes victim of energy vampires, his ego turns like, "You are okay, I am not Okay."

What triggers Energy Vampires? (1) Scarce mentality, (2) Competing mindset, (3) Rivalry, (4) Inferiority complex, (6) Status incongruence, (7) Sustained failures (8) Undue criticism and of all (9) Excessively controlled environment.

When it comes to safe guarding the emotional well-being, we must understand that every individual has his unique perspective. Having said this, no stereotype tactics can suit all individuals and their changing situations. Nevertheless, we can develop a list of plausible tactics that can be used interchangeably to manage sanctity of emotional well-being. The following listed tactics can be useful in safe guarding the emotional well-being:

- a. Make sure not to stay close to toxic people and culture

- b. Promote and practice values of self-esteem, respect, recognition, trust and confidence*
- c. Diffuse social incongruence*
- d. Encourage healthy social engagements across the social strata*
- e. Promote cooperation not competition*
- f. Say no to gossips*
- g. Be sensitive to others*

Living with Shame

Living with shame is a challenge. By definition, “Shame is a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior or a regrettable or unfortunate situation or action – Wikipedia.”

Modesty (Haya) has a different meaning. It is conducting on-self in a decent and morally upright manner and protecting one's privacy.

Shame is considered synonymous with guilt and regret. In modern times, an average person avoids to live with guilt and regret, for it affects his or her self-esteem and confidence. Secondly, it restricts the scope of opportunities in the future. And finally, it undermines the spirit of freedom to choose. Nevertheless, from another perspective, shame leads to a more complex behavior having both positive and negative manifestations.

We all live with shame at one point or another and deal with it in our unique ways. What matters is can it is dealt with constructively or as a means to destroy one's life or career.

When we say or do something wrong or foolish our conscience “nafs-e-lawama” comes into play which leads to a feeling of being ashamed. This also refers to morality-incongruence. Here it is advantageous to let oneself be ashamed of his wrong or foolish behavior, for it is usually instrumental in correcting or deterring wrong or foolish behavior and motivate people to correct the situation, hence is considered as positive.

Nevertheless, everyone has a thrash hold to deal with his shame in a constructive way. If it is overdone or continues for a long time, a person learns to develop ignorance and would resort to deny his or her objectionable behavior and begin to act shameless. It is also seen that undue appreciation of our otherwise wrong and foolish behaviors from the society or people legitimize our wrong and foolish actions thus reinforcing shameless behavior. Examples abound. Being shameless is, however, amoral and let the person continue repeating mistakes without a guilt or regret. It is pertinent here that we minimize our shame by acting responsibly ethically.

Another manifestation of shame is what if a person poor, for example, and all the contributing factors to his poverty are external. Yet, others may force the person to think as if being poor is his own mistake, which leads to induced shame. Sometimes, it is further reinforced by the perception that poverty is a curse. In this situation a person would automatically feel ashamed of himself although the reality is different. In this situation, persons should take realistic view of their situation and avoid giving heed to others.

Likewise, often we are told in so many ways that we are inferior; have not done well in our lives; or not good at work, etc. It again induces low regrets, which makes people more vulnerable to inferiority perception hence feeling

shameful. Being shameful has a devastating effect on the personality and performance of the person. For example, in our society a person not able to speak in English or not wearing expensive clothes is often made to feel shameful. Likewise, in the Indian sub-continent culture and in many other cultures, there were times when women were considered of low status and capability. A research was conducted on these lines, which concluded that due to the lower status of women at large, it was found that Indian women were generally shameful. Despite all the holy revelations, which promoted equality and dignity for all including women, it seems that cultures had eventually prevailed. Being shameful is damaging to individuals' self-esteem and dignity. The best remedy to avoid this kind of shamefulness is to challenge the cultural values.

In the above lines, shame is defined from multiple manifestations, namely; ashamed, shameless and shameful. Being ashamed in a controlled manner is a good deterrent against amoral behavior hence add to the discipline, shameless is a state of ignorance and denial. It encourages continuing with wrong behavior without carrying regrets or guilt, and shameful has its roots in the induced perception while the reality can be different. In nutshell, being ashamed in a controlled manner is constructive while being shameless and shameful states lead to indiscipline and destructive outcomes.

The Hierarchy Syndrome

Syndrome refers to a condition which causes multiple dysfunctionalities within the system. The terms “Hierarchy Syndrome” is a condition where multiple sub-hierarchies emerge within a hierarchy, which results in too many supervisors and too little executives. To elaborate this culture, visualize a Director assigning task to the manager. Ideally, the manager should execute the task himself or herself. But for the worse, he or she further passes-on the task to a third person within his own hierarchy, who is mostly likely to be of lower designation. This delegation might continue up to the person at the lowest-end of the hierarchy. It is clear that in this culture, execution is carried out by the last person, while all the middle persons act as proclaimed supervisors. Do they really add any value? No, but just the cost of doing business hikes.

Ideally, incumbents might have designations commensurate with the scope and complexity of their respective roles. They should get tasks directly from the top person. This structure is likely to follow many advantages, namely; each single incumbent shall be individually responsible for the execution of his or her respective task, he or she will have more control on the through-put and out-put; communication would become more efficient, last but not the least it would be more intrinsically satisfying for the employee.

Is Revolution A Must?

Our concept of revolution primarily stems from crowd followership. In more precise terms, the changing expectations, perceptions and wishes of the people usually drive the change; however, the existing system may be the most compatible to the context.

The example below elaborates the above. There is this business conglomerate which consists of enterprises that by default have low revenue potentials. Having said this, rationally the profit can be maximized through "Cost Leadership". The nature of enterprises is such that cost of head-count is most dominant, which means it is incumbent for the conglomerate to keep their employee cost low to ensure higher profits. In fact, this has been the policy since long and the conglomerate has been earning fair profits. As a new tied of aliens from the private sector have recently entered into the company. They are now pushing the company to bring in more expensive employees only to secure their personal advantage. If the conglomerate succumbs to their recommendations it would only create a strategic mismatch of their revenues and cost of employees to the worse.

Having said this, we can always debate on the given premise of revolution of the systems evolved by humans,

though it would be normative; what to talk about forcing to evolve the covenants of

Faith politically esp. when it is based on the wisdom of the Creator (Allah). It is absolutely insane! Allah says in Quran, “You shall not find changes in HIS rules (sunnah)”.

The Bureaucratic Ego

Each customer brings in a unique set of requirements and deserve solutions from the service providers (businesses). However, if the representatives are tied to give stereotype solutions only how come one can expect fair value for money to the customers.

It is a symbol of discipline that people follow policies in verbatim. It definitely helps the employees to save their skin and enterprise to maintain proclaimed discipline in its operations, but at who's cost?

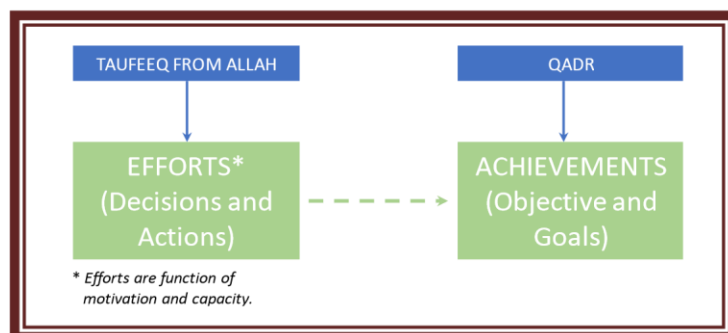
Enterprises that give some leverage to their managers, which they should use judiciously to think creatively while doing customer service have more competitive and improved. Emergence of United Bank Limited is one glaring example, though it was a daring initiative of an individual bank manager, his organization did not give him the leverage. Late, Aga Hasan Abidi, the legend, was a Branch manager at Habib Bank Ltd. Saigals were his high worth customers at that time. One fine morning, they placed a request for unforeseen requirement of temporary overdraft. Had the manager processed the approval of loan through usual bureaucratic route it would have taken much time and their need was legitimately urgent. So, the manager provided the temporary overdraft to his customers in a timely manner, knowing that they are high worth customer and there was no risk of default as such.

Paradoxically, the management following their bureaucratic ego disapproved the loan and instructed the manager to immediately call back. When the manager contacted his customers, they told him that they want to establish their own bank and that the manager should consider taking a lead role. Subsequently, Aga Hasan Abidi took the opportunity and established United Bank Limited. The bank always had put customer needs first. Doing so, within a period of ten years it was able to surpass HBL in its performance and eventually became the most vibrant bank until it was nationalized. HBL lost a high worth customer and created its own competitor only because of their bureaucratic ego.

The Problem

Customer relation managers are more empowered to think creatively about customers' requirements but think they are only responsible to capture customers while rest is delegated to operations managers, who obviously work with a fixed mind: The result is usually chaos for the customer.

Goals are Instrumental for Success or Failure Alike



“Allah has taken full responsibility to provide for our needs. But as the proverb goes that the Well does not come to the

thirsty, he has to go to the Well. So, to get what Allah has put aside for our needs we must make efforts. Though we can make no efforts without His approval: Allah is the one who gives taufeeq to make efforts.”

Indeed, goals have significant effect on motivating our efforts. But the question is whether every goal is of equal advantage in our career and life. In other words, some goals can help us progress in the right direction but some may displace our progress to a lesser advantageous tangent.

Making goals is the first step towards success but not a guarantee. Often times we make rationalized goals: “Do as Roman does” without considering their true value. Examples abound. A friend once made a pertinent point in this context – Young men and women when they go to the developed countries, sometimes they forego to educate themselves and rush to start making money. They are able to make good living but are losers at the end of the day. Many big-time businessmen ignore to educate their offspring believing that they can inherit the acumen from

them to maintain the business, however, ignoring the uncertainties of future dynamics. Eventually it is observed that the businesses move on the downward trajectory.

The problem lies in the fact that often we make goals without focusing on our “purpose” or on the shallow achievements without fulfilling the prerequisites. Such as, individuals make goals to get a degree, achieve titles and positions in an organization and command respect. It is perfectly legitimate but when it is attained through accomplishments of realistic underlined milestones not otherwise – a student acquires sufficient knowledge; a professional build upon his capacity and productivity; and so on.

The advice is, always to keep your goals rational and aligned to your purpose and follow the pre-requisites. Remember, no short cuts in life work.

Reality of Positivity

The word “Positivity” sounds like a powerful-attitude towards life and situations. Introspecting on our positive stance we had taken last time perhaps may tell a different story. If this is true, then it is about time to uncover the reality of positivity.

Positivity Redefined

Faith on All Mighty Allah being the only Rub-ul-Alameen is the acceptance of nothing but a fact! Faith on All Mighty Allah teaches us to embrace all the other realities of life and then to decide the right response is true positivity

Being positive is the most desired position in life. But does it really work all the time, every time? We are so much sold to the idea that we seldom think answering these questions.

Let us begin with looking at our understanding of positivity, if it is objectively defined or not. What we generally think of positivity is something like this;

- a. What we believe, we get
- b. If we think, we can
- c. When we decide, we will

One simple question to ourselves can challenge the above; If it was so simple and if the relationship between positivity and outcome was just of a cause-n-effect then so many people would not have failed in their lives. In fact, we all know this for fact but would rather continue to maintain uninformed position on positivity as a recipe for success all the time. It is so because it gives comfort, however it is often a delusion –

as they say, "Ignorance is a bliss." Here the ignorance is most of the time because of lack of knowledge about facts or simply living in denial.

Having a faith is positive but keeping faith without knowledge is not positive. Let me explain this with a dialogue of a movie. The hero argues with a priest that belief on the creator is necessary. But there are two Gods; one is who created everything anything, and the other is whom you have made. We know there is a creator but not sure of the Gods we made ourselves.

The rule which follows is that having a verbatim belief or position based on knowledge and acceptance of information and facts is positive-attitude. But our positivity based on assumptions, desires or even ignorance cannot be equated with positivity, however powerful it may look like.

We may conclude that positivity is an attitude of maintaining a realistic outlook based on evidence and facts. Anything else could be just a fantastic idea. Having said this, maintaining a positive outlook helps us take much needed decisions and act rightly, while a positivity premised on assumptions, desires or ignorance is a sure recipe for inertia – a disaster.

Attitude of Gratitude

Those who see a glass of water half empty live cursing their situations all the time. But those who cherish the fact that the glass of water is half filled stay contented. Paradoxically, the situation facing both persons is the same, yet their respective outlook makes their lives a lot different.

The more informed and steadfast we are on our faith on All Mighty Allah, more we able to cherish our situation. Having said this, attitude of gratitude is...

Acknowledging what we have, with a taste of contentment.

Unleashing the opportunities in the situation and maximizing outcomes, by acting responsibly – legitimately and assertively.

Accepting that we are not the only person facing the tribulations, everyone is being tested now and then with similar challenges.

We can develop the attitude of gratitude by initiating correction the way we live our lives. Some examples are given below; –

Stay connected to your creator (Allah ST) – invoke Him for being able to work harder, with a hope and keep your trust on Him and follow His guidance without fail.

Embrace every situation as-is and cherish everything in your life – If I were not born, I would not have existed.

Take a rationale view of your situation and stay content – value your haves and work harder for your goals.

Always view your situation on a longer horizon – what matters today may not be of any value later.

Don't curse your situation, describe it and learn to deal with it – there is always a solution to every problem.

Let not the fear of unknown overpower you – do not think you will fail anyways.

Patience is a Super Skill

Responding to situations or people in haste is designed to cause disaster. Whereas a delayed and considered response is more rational. According to research conducted by Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional

Allah is with the patient!
Hardship follows comfort!
Invoke Allah with hope!
Later will be better than today!

Intelligence concluded that spontaneous responses are generated by the impulsive brain without adequate analysis of the facts. On the contrary, delayed responses are generated through the cognitive brain hence inevitably requires longer time to respond. In simple words, response in haste is an outburst of anger or despondency. While delayed responses tend to be informed and objective.

Patience is an ability to hold back impulsive responses. It is essentially premised on the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Patience also help us remain steadfast and determined despite all the odds, which is a sure route to success. Allah says, "Allah is with the patient." Having said this, ability to be patient has a direct effect on how we respond to situations and people.

Building the skill...

The good news is that patience as a skill can be developed. The following are some ways to build it.

Build Trust: Keep your trust that Allah is our ultimate savior, trust others until they fall short on their promises, and lastly have trust on yourself – never lose hope.

Believe: Always believe that all challenges and problems are temporary – there is always a bright beginning after a dark long night.

Hardship follows Comfort: Embrace Hardship with hard work, determination and hope – a student who faces many hardships and later secures a brighter career.

Let's us commit to practice patience, always...

Trust and Contentment: Manifestations of Faith

Faith should be translated into actions, otherwise it remains a rhetoric. While faith encompasses every action, here let us explore the two manifestations of faith: Trust and Contentment. In Arabic language the word for trust is "Tawakal" and the word for contentment is "Raza".

Out of ignorance, we often define trust (Tawakal) being "wait and see attitude" where outcomes are considered independent of our actions. As said, this is an ignorant view and does not correspond to our true faith. In reality, however, Trust (Tawakal) on Allah is making all out efforts and exploiting all the opportunities with guidance (Taufeeq) from Allah, then keeping your trust on Allah that he shall bless the right outcome. For example, we need to sow the right seed at the right time, give water then keep our trust on Allah for the plant to come out.

Let us not say we did all out efforts but Allah did not approve it. In other words, He gave unjust outcome. Think, how can He be unjust? Failure to achieve our plans is because of our own mistakes: Inertia or insufficient or wrong actions are usually the

cause of failures. Not that Allah failed us (Nauzobillah). Surely, He is just and most caring.

At this point it seems pertinent to understand the truth about destiny (Taqdeer). It has two dimensions; Allah's infinite wisdom and unparallel knowledge of the future.

Based on His infinite wisdom, Allah decrees matters like when will we be born, who will be our parents and siblings, when and where we shall die, how much livelihood will be given to us, etc. None has the power and authority to change the course, but what Allah Himself may consider.

Example: A couple may wish to have a male child but Allah by his own wisdom may bless a female child. Here one has to be contented (Ra'zi with Allah's wisdom). As Allah says, "Oh my slave enter Jannah, may you be pleased with Allah he be pleased with you". Example of the mother of Bibi Marrium mother of Prophet Essa, may Allah be pleased with her, fits here.

His unparallel knowledge of the future, Allah knows what efforts we shall make as we live through our lives, and what outcomes our efforts shall merit.

Example: With guidance (taufeeq) from Allah we may put all out efforts for a target such as passing an exam. Then we need to have trust (tawakal) on Him for the positive outcome. Once, my colleague at the World Bank project had taken her Ph.D. exams. I asked her if she will pass. She said, "My exam results will tell me if I prepared for the exam or not." She was confident that the outcome will be just.

Tribulations

We all face tribulations in our lives and often ask; Why me? Trivial or major, tribulations often affect our morale. Generally, we perceive tribulations as a curse or injustice. Sometimes we relate it to our deep-down awakening of guilt. A positive way of dealing with tribulations is to leverage them to build strength. Allah (Rab-ul-Alameen) enlightens in the Noble Quran Surah al-Inshirah verse 5 "So, Verily, With Every Difficulty, There is Relief."

Tribulations may hit an individual or a group of people at large. It covers a range of difficult situations and grief facing an individual. Such as; challenges, problems, troubling conditions, afflictions, misfortune and last but not the least suffering loss.

Quranic Perspective: In Sura Al Ankabut verse 2, Rab-ul-Alameen says, "Do people think that they will be left (at ease) only on their saying, [We believe] and will not be put to any test?" In Sura Shura verse 30, Allah Rab-ul-Alameen educates us that, "Whatever affliction befalls you; it is because of what your hands have earned, and yet He overlooks many (of the wrongs you do)." In Sura Al-An 'ām Verse 17 Rab-ul-Alameen says, "And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him. And if He touches you with good then He is over all things competent."

Thus, we have basis to conclude that tribulation is not a curse from the people nor it is a punishment from Rab-ul-Alameen. It is either a trial to which Rab-ul-Alameen

purposely put us into or the outcome of our own acts of carelessness, injustice and violations that we commit so often.

Dealing with a Tribulation

It is established that tribulations are a trial or aftermath of our own actions. So, let us reason out the underlying factors and develop a strategy to deal with tribulations rather constructively.

i. Tribulation as a Trial

Rub-ul-Alameen is all knowing and benevolent, and HE does not put burden on us beyond our strength. The purpose of trials is to let us establish if we have stronger faith on Him or not and if we remain on the righteous path or not come what may.

Sometimes, HE tries us by making us powerful and showering his infinite resources. Or restraining our ability (limiting our choices to act) and limiting our access to His resources (poverty). He expects us to show gratitude in the former situation and patience in the latter situation.

The two words carry a lot of responsibility on to us. Showing gratitude means to exercise power and make use of resources as per the guidance of Allah and do not transgress His guidance by your actions and deeds. And lastly, do not take pride in what you have been given. Allah bestowed much power and wealth to Qaroon, but HE destroyed him and his wealth only because he proclaimed that he was given what he was given because of his own knowledge and efforts.

Allah expects us to show patience when HE tries us by restraining our power and reducing our resources. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart; and be patient. Indeed, Allah is with the patient. Al Anfal 8:46. Patience refers to forbearing the challenges by keeping unconditional trust on Allah and hoping that future will be better. It does not mean to accept the situation (failures) as-is and stop working.

ii. Tribulation as an Aftermath

When we become so used to committing wrong, violating others' rights or deviating from the right path, we become complacent if it will ever hit us back. Sadly, examples abound. And sometimes we rationalize a wrong only to commit a wrong. Whatever the case may be, facing of the aftermath is inevitable be it sooner or later.

Most logically, in this situation the only rescue is to seek pardon from Allah with a commitment to stop. Rab-ul-Alameen says, "He does not change the condition of his slave until he (slave) changes what is in his heart (neat and deeds) Al Ra'd 13:11.

Conclusion

Always be grateful to Rab-ul-Alameen, however the life is, keep unconditional trust on Him, hope for the better and be patient. Finally, stop complaining and self-pity – why me attitude.